

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (Withdrawn) A method of directing a stock worker to transfer stock items from various storage bins to containers according to a series of orders requesting desired quantities of specific stock items, wherein a light is associated with each bin, the method comprising:
 - assigning unique identifiers to each container;
 - illuminating a light associated with a bin holding a current item requested in a first order;
 - displaying a desired quantity of the current stock item;
 - assigning a container to the current stock item;
 - displaying the unique identifier for the assigned container; and
 - repeating the light illuminating, quantity displaying, container assigning, and identifier displaying steps for subsequent stock items requested in the first and subsequent orders.
2. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 1, further comprising a step of indicating a direction of a bin associated with a subsequent requested stock item.
3. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 1, further comprising a step of signaling completion of a stock item pick before repeating the method for a subsequent stock item.
4. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 1, in which a central indicator is provided for displaying the desired quantity and the unique identifier, and in which a bin indicator is provided for each bin, each bin indicators incorporating the light associated with the bin.
5. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 1, in which an integrated bin indicator is associated with each bin, each bin indicator incorporating the light associated with the bin, a number display for displaying the desired quantity, and a container display for displaying the unique identifier.

6. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 1, in which the containers are incorporated into order assembling apparatus.

7. (Previously Presented) Apparatus for directing a stock worker to transfer stock items from various storage bins to containers according to a series of orders requesting desired quantities of specific stock items, in which each order is divided into a series of pick operations, and wherein each storage bin contains an associated stock item, the apparatus comprising:

at least one number display for showing a desired quantity of each stock item;

at least one container display for showing a unique container identifier associated with a selected container into which each stock item is to be placed, wherein each container is assigned a unique identifier;

at least two location indicators associated with the storage bins, a first location indicator comprising a light associated with each storage bin, and a second location indicator comprising a direction display; and

a computer operably coupled to the lights, the at least one number display, the at least one container display, and the direction display, wherein the computer receives the orders for the stock items and assigns a selected container to each stock item, directs the at least one number display to show the desired quantity of the stock item in a current pick operation, directs the at least one container display to show the unique container identifier associated with the selected container assigned to the current pick operation, illuminates the light for the storage bin associated with the specific stock item in the current pick operation, and operates the direction display to indicate a direction of a storage bin associated with a subsequent pick operation.

8. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 7, further comprising a plurality of central indicators, in which each central indicator incorporates a number display and a container display, and wherein each central indicator is associated with a section of the storage bins.

9. (Canceled)

10. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 8, in which each central indicator further comprises a multi-purpose exception button operably coupled to the computer.

11. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 8, in which the lights are incorporated into bin indicators associated with the storage bins, each bin indicator further comprising a quitting switch operably coupled to the computer and adapted to generate a pick complete signal.

12. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 7, further comprising integrated bin indicators associated with the storage bins, each integrated bin indicator including the number display, the container display, and the light.

13. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 12, in which each integrated bin indicator further comprises a direction display operably coupled to the computer, the computer controlling each direction display to indicate a direction of a storage bin associated with a subsequent pick operation.

14. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 12, in which each integrated bin indicator further comprises a quitting switch operably coupled to the computer and adapted to generate a pick complete signal.

15. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 12, in which each integrated bin indicator further comprises a multi-purpose exception button operably coupled to the computer.

16. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 7, in which several stock workers are assigned primary storage bin sections, and in which the computer directs each stock worker to pick products from storage bins within the assigned primary storage bin section.

17. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 16, in which the computer may override the assigned primary storage bin section to direct stock workers to storage bins located in heavy pick areas.

18. (Previously Presented) Apparatus for assembling orders for desired quantities of specific stock items divided into pick operations, the apparatus comprising:

a plurality of storage bins, wherein each storage bin holds a specific stock item;

a central conveyor;

a plurality of containers positioned adjacent the central conveyor for temporarily holding stock items picked from the storage bins, each container having a unique identifier assigned thereto and including a dispenser operable to discharge stock items onto the central conveyor;

at least one number display for showing a desired quantity of the stock item in a current pick operation;

at least one container display for showing the unique container identifier associated with a selected container into which the stock item of the current pick operation is to be placed;

at least two location indicators associated with the storage bins, a first location indicator comprising a light associated with each storage bin adapted to show a location of the stock item required during the current pick operation, and a second location indicator comprising a direction display adapted to show a direction of a storage bin associated with a subsequent pick operation; and

a computer operably coupled to the container dispensers, the at least one number display, the at least one container display, the direction display, and the lights, wherein the computer receives the orders for the stock items and generates the pick operations, assigns a selected container to each stock item, directs the at least one number display to show the desired quantity of the stock item in the current pick operation, directs the at least one container display to show the unique container identifier associated with the selected container assigned to the stock item in the current pick operation, illuminates the light for the storage bin associated with the specific stock item in the current pick operation, operates the direction display to indicate a direction of a storage bin associated with a subsequent pick operation, and controls each of the container dispensers associated with a complete order to discharge at substantially the same point along the central conveyor.

19. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 18, further comprising a plurality of central indicators, in which each central indicator incorporates a number display, a direction display, and a container display, and wherein each central indicator is associated with a section of the storage bins.

20. (Canceled)

21. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 19, in which each central indicator further comprises a multi-purpose exception button operably coupled to the computer.

22. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 19, in which the lights are incorporated into bin indicators associated with the storage bins, each bin indicator further comprising a quitting switch operably coupled to the computer and adapted to generate a pick complete signal.

23. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 18, further comprising integrated bin indicators associated with the storage bins, each integrated bin indicator including the number display, the container display, and the light.

24. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 23, in which each integrated bin indicator further comprises a direction display operably coupled to the computer, the computer controlling each direction display to indicate a direction of a storage bin associated with a subsequent pick operation.

25. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 23, in which each integrated bin indicator further comprises a quitting switch operably coupled to the computer and adapted to generate a pick complete signal.

26. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 23, in which each integrated bin indicator further comprises a multi-purpose exception button operably coupled to the computer.

27. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 18, in which several stock workers are assigned to primary storage bin sections, and in which the computer directs each stock worker to pick products from storage bins within the assigned primary storage bin section.

28. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 27, in which the computer may override the assigned primary storage bin section to direct stock workers to storage bins located in heavy pick areas.

29. (Withdrawn) Delicate product handling apparatus for use with stock order filling apparatus having a central conveyor for receiving stock items, the central conveyor having an upper surface and a discharge end, the delicate product handling apparatus comprising:

a transfer conveyor having a loading portion positioned adjacent the discharge end of the central conveyor and a discharge portion;

a plurality of trays attached to the transfer conveyor, each tray having an upper surface with a receiving end substantially aligned with the central conveyor upper surface to receive stock items from the central conveyor and a discharge end, wherein each tray is adapted to move to a discharge position at the discharge portion of the transfer conveyor, thereby to discharge the stock items from the discharge end; and

a packing table positioned adjacent the discharge portion of the transfer conveyor, the packing table having a top surface with a rear edge substantially aligned with the discharge ends of the trays thereby to receive the stock items discharged from the trays.

30. (Withdrawn) The delicate product handling apparatus of claim 29, in which each tray is pivotably attached to the transfer conveyor, wherein each tray is rotated to the discharge position.

31. (Withdrawn) The delicate product handling apparatus of claim 30, in which each tray has an inflatable diaphragm associated therewith for rotating the tray to the discharge position.

32. (Withdrawn) The delicate product handling apparatus of claim 29, in which the packing table comprises a plurality of packing sections, and in which each tray is controlled to actuate to the discharge position at a selected packing section.

33. (Withdrawn) Delicate product handling apparatus for use with stock order filling apparatus having a central conveyor for receiving stock items, the central conveyor having an upper surface and a discharge end, the delicate product handling apparatus comprising:

a transfer chute having an upper surface with a first end positioned adjacent the central conveyor discharge end to receive stock items from the central conveyor and a second end, wherein the second end is lower than the first end so that the stock items slide from the first end to the second end under gravity force;

a chute swing arm pivotably mounted above the transfer chute and positioned to engage the stock items, the swing arm adapted to actuate between first and second positions thereby to direct the stock items to first and second sides, respectively, of the upper surface second end; and

a packing table having an upper surface positioned adjacent the second end of the chute upper surface adapted to receive the stock items from the transfer chute.

34. (Withdrawn) The delicate product handling apparatus of claim 33, in which the packing table comprises a plurality of packing sections.

35. (Withdrawn) The delicate product handling apparatus of claim 34, in which the packing table further comprises at least one swing arm pivotably mounted above the packing table upper surface and positioned to engage the stock items, thereby to direct the stock items to selected packing sections of the packing table.

36. (Withdrawn) The delicate product handling apparatus of claim 33, in which the packing table upper surface is sloped.